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ABSTRACT

The Vocational Assessment Record (VAR), a management system designed to accompany a token economy based on work behaviors in handicapped and nonhandicapped high school and adult basic education students with a minimum of instructor time and effort, is described. Among ways in which the VAR is said to be different from other motivational and classroom management systems are that it does not require sophisticated training, it is inexpensive, it is appropriate for all types of students in special and regular education, and it lends itself to individualization. Six steps in implementing the VAR are identified, including ways to explain the system to the students and procedures for discussing the student's self evaluation. The authors claim the VAR works for a variety of reasons, including that it strengthens behaviors incompatible with disruptive and nonwork behaviors, it teaches students to delay gratification, and it simulates the real world of work. (CL)

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MOTIVATION AND MANAGEMENT METHODS TO DEVELOP THE WORK RELATED BEHAVIORS OF HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

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MOTIVATION AND MANAGEMENT METHODS TO DEVELOP THE WORK RELATED BEHAVIORS OF HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

The primary purpose of this particular instructional system is to develop a motivational and classroom management system which would develop work related behaviors with a minimum of instructor or teacher time and effort. This following system has been used in vocational high school classes, CETA programs, adult basic education and vocational programs.

The power of token economies to bring increased student achievement and desirable behaviors has been demonstrated. There is a need for a simple management system that instructors or teachers can use to effectively manage students with a minimum of effort and instruction. This simplified system would eliminate: (1) complicated record keeping, such as cycle charts and behavioral designs; (2) the extra work which necessitates personnel, i.e., aides, volunteers, etc., and (3) additional teacher time. Such a system should not only increase achievement but should also reduce disruptive student behaviors and teach desirable work related behaviors.

After a thorough review of the literature, several systems were synthesized and an operational plan was devised to create a simple system that would meet the above criteria. The Vocational Work Behavior Accomplishment Record was created tried, and modified over a period of eight years until it reached its present state.

While it is recognized that there has been a great deal of research on token economies, the strength of this approach lies not only in its simplicity, but also in the verification of its effectiveness. The data supplied by instructors

and classroom teachers regarding the VAR gives overwhelming support to the functional utility of this direct approach. The data indicates a functional relationship between VAR and an increase in desirable behavior and achievement.

VAR Differentiating Aspects

The following aspects differentiate VAR from other motivational and classroom management systems:

1. it does not require sophisticated training
2. it does not require much training time; most teachers or instructors learn the technique in an average of four hours
3. it can be immediately established in any school, college or vocational program
4. it is inexpensive
5. it is applicable to all types of students in special and regular education classrooms
6. in most cases, the same plan can be used to solve the majority of a student's behavior and/or academic problems
7. it does not place an undue burden on the teacher's instructional time
8. the students evaluate and record their own behavior, thereby creating a condition of self evaluation and self control
9. the teacher confirms or refutes the student's self evaluation
10. the system can be faded with a minimum of effort
11. multiple schedules can be operating at one time
12. it lends itself to student individualization and different teaching styles
13. it can be used with one student or with an entire class
14. students can select their own back-up reinforcers
15. it can be generalized into a home situation
16. it develops and increases real world of work behaviors.

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Duplicate the Vocational Accomplishment Record (see Appendix). Make about sixteen copies for each student. This will be enough for approximately half of the school year, if done on both sides.

Step 2: Record the names of each student on manila folders in your classroom and place the VAR in each folder. Put the folders in a cardboard box on a table near your classroom entrance, or put them in a manila envelope which is stapled to the bulletin board by the door. Later you will explain to the students that when they enter the classroom they are to pick up their VAR and deposit it in the box or manila envelope upon leaving the classroom. Students must be held accountable for obtaining the VAR form themselves to develop self-responsibility behaviors.

Step 3: Before explaining the system, ask the students what privileges or activities they would like in the classroom. List their suggestions on the chalkboard. Add a few suggestions such as no homework over the weekend, free time in class, etc. Narrow the choices for the week down to approximately five or six. Do not use too many reinforcers per week as they can become unwiedly and time-consuming. Record the reinforcers or rewards on a reward menu or special place on the chalkboard where all the students can see it.

Step 4: Explain to the student that in the real world of work, people have to do certain things in order to get other things they want i.e., labor for money, privileges, etc. Explain to the students that you are going to give them an opportunity to get the rewards or reinforcers they want or like

by doing things that are normally expected of them in school. Now explain the system in this way:

A. Instruct a student to pick up his/her folder from the box (Vocational Accomplishment Box) or manila folder that has her/his name on it and go to his/her seat. Have the rest of the students do this individually.

B. Once the students are seated, explain the Vocational Accomplishment Record to them. Have the students look at the VAR in their folders. Explain to the students that they can earn rewards by earning points. Points can be earned by doing the following:

1. If the student was at their work station before the last bell rang, he/she is to place the number in the appropriate box; e.g., if the day were Monday, the student would place the numeral in the first box under Monday.

2. If the student had their equipment for class, they are to place the numeral in the appropriate box under Monday.

3. If the student did not leave his/her station or work area during the designated time, she/he is to place the numeral four in the appropriate box. If the student had to be reminded to stay at his/her station, a point is subtracted for each occurrence.

4. If the student started working immediately when assigned a task, she/he is to place the number four in the appropriate box. If the student had to be reminded to begin a task, a point is subtracted for each occurrence.

5. If the student completed the assigned work, she/he is to place the number four in the appropriate box. For each task the student did not finish, one point is subtracted.

6. At the end of the class if the student has completed her/his work satisfactorily as evaluated by the instructor, she/he is to

place a number four in the appropriate box. Points are awarded for the quality of the student's work.

7. If the student worked quietly she/he is to place the number four in the appropriate box. The student is to subtract a point for each time he or she was reminded to work quietly or stop talking.

8. If the student worked safely, he/she is to put the numeral 4 in the appropriate box. Points are to be subtracted for not working safely.

9. If the student was receptive to suggestions, the student puts a four in the appropriate box. If the student was not receptive, points are subtracted.

10. Optional It is used to improve a specific deficit behavior a student has or to reward desirable behaviors.

Tell the students that they will evaluate themselves at the end of each class period. When you tell them to take out their VAR and self evaluate, they have 1 minute to do so. Inform the students that approximately 2 minutes before the end of the class, you will come to each student's work area or desk (or you may have each student come to your desk with his/her VAR) and you will either agree or disagree with the student's self evaluation. The teacher's agreement will be noted by a slash through the appropriate boxes or the comment that you may total your points. If the teacher disagrees with the student's self evaluation, an "X" will be entered in the box/area of disagreement and the teacher will enter the adjusted number of points. After the teacher has confirmed or refuted the student's evaluation, the student then totals up his/her points. Emphasize that no discussion regarding disagreement between the teacher or instructor's observations and the student's observations can occur at that time.

If a discussion occurs between the teacher or instructor and the student, the student loses all points for the time period. It is permissible to allow a student to discuss a disagreement during recess or after school. The student must request this in writing and place it in the sharing box. This is a box with a slit in it. It is placed on a table or desk in the classroom. Reemphasize that students lose all points for cheating, striking another student or defacing school property (see Appendix).

After the instructor or teacher confirms or refutes the student's self evaluation the student is instructed to return her/his VAR to the VAR box in the front of the room. The next day he/she is to pick it up from the same box.

After explaining the VAR to the students, ask them if there are any questions.

Step 5: At this point, the instructor or teacher explains that at the end of the week, Friday afternoon, the students will total up their points and make selections from the reinforcement menu dependent upon the points they have earned. Free time is usually rewarding to most students. Four points equal 1 minute of free time. The teacher should inform the students of the day and time period they may obtain or use their reinforcers for reward. This usually occurs on the following week. In some cases, it may be necessary to make exchanges after a task is completed or at a specified time period every day. As the students develop self control, the teacher or instructor should extend the time period between reinforcement exchanges to help develop delay of gratification.

A. Prior to this, the teacher should have determined the number of points each reward/reinforcment is worth. At first, make is easy for the student to obtain the reinforcements. Later you will increase the number of points required for reinforcements (inflation), and vary the reinforcers to keep student interest optimum. It is generally best to change reinforcers every two weeks so that satiation won't occur.

B. There is an alternate procedrue which uses only one reinforcement menu. This menu keeps points the same and does not utilize inflation. In order to do this, the range of points between the value of the lowest item and the highest item on the reinforcement menu must be made large from the very beginning of the program. This wide range of points permits the student to earn more desirable rewards as he works harder, thereby eliminating inflation, which can inadvertantly be perceived by some students as penalizing good behavior.

Step 6: Tell the students that each week a blank Vocational Accomplishment Record will be placed in their folders and the class will continue to follow the same procedures.

Reasons System Works

1. It strengthens behaviors that are incompatible with disruptive and non work behaviors. If a student is at his/her work station, doing owrk, and not talking, it is unlikely that she/he will be getting into trouble.

2. It shapes desirable behaviors through points earned.

3. It punishes undesirable behavior through points list.

4. Self evaluation continually takes place.

5. Students can see the gradual point increases of the desired behaviors on their Vocational Accomplishment Record.

6. After a while, the student's behavior becomes a habit and generalizes to other situations and jobs.

7. It teaches students to delay gratification.

8. It simulates the real world of work. For example: 1) parents must be at work on time. 2) have their tools for work, 3) start work at a specified time or when a bell or buzzer sounds, 4) finish work that is given to them, 5) do the work with a certain amount of quality, and 6) do acceptable work, 7) work quietly and work safely and 8) be receptive to suggestions.

9. It gives the students an incentive to work.

10. It forces the teacher to become aware of the student's entering behavior and to reinforce desirable behaviors. (This is done by noting whether the student can do the work given to her/him).

11. It forces the teacher or instructor to give daily feedback to the student when the teacher or instructor has to confirm or refute the self evaluations.

12. Work responses are rewarded equitably.

APPENDIX

NAME_____

VOCATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT RECORD

IN ORDER TO EARN REWARDS OR TIME IN THE FREE TIME AREA, YOU MUST EARN POINTS. POINTS CAN BE EARNED BY DOING THE FOLLOWING:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1. I WAS AT MY WORK STATION BEFORE THE LAST BELL RANG. (1 POINT)					
2. I HAD MY EQUIPMENT WITH ME. (1 POINT)					
3. I DID NOT LEAVE MY STATION OR WORK AREA WITHOUT PERMISSION (4 POINTS)					
4. I STARTED MY WORK IMMEDIATELY WHEN IT WAS GIVEN TO ME. (4 POINTS)					
5. I FINISHED THE WORK THAT WAS GIVEN TO ME. (4 POINTS)					
6. I PERFORMED QUALITY WORK. (4 POINTS)					
7. I WORKED QUIETLY. (4 POINTS)					
8. I WORKED SAFELY. (4 POINTS)					
9. I WAS RECEPTIVE OR OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS (4 POINTS)					
10. BONUS POINTS FOR A SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR					

1. STRIKING OR PUSHING ANOTHER STUDENT	LOSE ALL POINTS
2. DEFACING SCHOOL PROPERTY	LOSE ALL POINTS
3. CHEATING	LOSE ALL POINTS
4. ARGUING WITH THE TEACHER OVER POINTS	LOSE ALL POINTS